

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

WINTER 2010/2011

# WARRIORS



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Commander in Chief



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# WARRIORS

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs



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**Airborne History.** Private First Class Wilson Berlin, left, and Private First Class Axel Joe, center, from B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne, Alaska Army National Guard, and Captain Robert Covington, from U.S. Army Alaska, prepare to jump from a UH-60 Black Hawk during a joint airborne operation in Bethel in November. Approximately 20 National Guard Soldiers and active duty Army Soldiers made history by making the first jump into the Bethel Flats Rotary Wing Drop Zone.



Photo: Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment



### Missile Defense Change of Command.

Captain Ron Painter, left, incoming A Company commander, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, accepts the guidon during the Military Police Company change of command ceremony at Fort Greely in November. After accepting the unit's colors, the incoming commander passes them to the senior noncommissioned officer, First Sergeant John Drew, to carry and manage. The Soldiers of this company are responsible to secure and defend the Missile Defense Complex on Fort Greely. Photo: Staff Sergeant Jack Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion



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veterans and families are invited and encouraged. Please send articles and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, complete mailing address and comments to:

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# For the People

Governor Sean Parnell  
Commander in Chief



## A Prosperous and Safe Year Ahead

As 2011 begins, we reflect on the accomplishments of last year and look forward to the future. The Department of Military & Veterans Affairs works diligently to maintain a safe and secure environment for Alaskans. And our men and women in uniform work tirelessly to provide safety and freedoms for others.

Last year, I met and spoke with many Guard members before they deployed. The aviators of B Company, 1-207th Aviation, have been serving for several months in Iraq transporting cargo, military members and distinguished visitors throughout the

country. They represent Alaska and the nation well, and I am proud of their selfless service. Their deployment has been a success, and we look forward to welcoming them home later this year.

Locally, the Alaska Air National Guard answers the call of duty, and we have dozens of Airmen serving across the globe from Guam to Afghanistan. They perform a variety of missions ranging from air refueling to combat search and rescue. Our pararescuemen have saved countless lives on the battlefield, putting into action all their training, experience

and professionalism. We continue to keep our deployed and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

Here on the home front, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is closely monitoring weather conditions across the state and stands ready to intercede in the event of a disaster. As we face winter weather at work and play, we can rest assured that a dedicated force is standing by in case of emergency.

I thank all of you at DMVA for serving our state and nation. Your efforts ensure a prosperous and safe year for all Alaskans. ■



**Spreading the Spirit of the Season.** Governor Sean Parnell and his wife, Sandy, help Santa and Mrs. Claus during a visit to Hoonah with Operation Santa Claus in December. The Parnells flew with members of the Alaska National Guard, Coast Guard, volunteers and representatives from Sikorsky for Operation Santa Claus, the Alaska National Guard's annual community relations program that brings the spirit of the holidays to rural villages across the state. Photo: Petty Officer 3rd Class Walter Shinn, U.S. Coast Guard





# The Adjutant General

Major General Thomas H. Katkus

Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard  
& Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs



## Thanking Our Men and Women Serving in Uniform

I would like to deviate from my usual comments regarding the tremendous work and accomplishments of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs and devote this space to recognizing and thanking the great men and women of our organization serving in uniform.

Despite the changes in our nation's overseas contingency operations, this holiday season we had more than 200 Soldiers and Airmen deployed in combat operations. Meanwhile, at Fort Greely, Clear Air Force Station and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, we have more than 600 military members working missions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We also have our Alaska Air National Guard rescue professionals, refueling tanker unit, and our Civil Support Team ready to deploy support within an hour's notice, along with our Counterdrug Support Program providing ongoing assistance to both local law enforcement and community-based operations.

Recently, I watched our Airmen of the 168th Air Refueling Wing work through one of the state's most devastating ice storms to meet their deployment schedule. They had to free four of their aircraft, which were frozen to the airfield at Eielson Air Force Base. Despite the additional challenges created by the weather, they worked through them and departed on time and to standard in an exemplary manner. The community and all their loved ones looked on with pride as their "hometown" Air Force went to war.

In December, I had an opportunity to visit our 76 Soldiers from B Company, 1-207th Aviation, who are deployed to Iraq. Their mission is to transport distinguished visitors, troops and equipment via UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from camp to camp in a safe and secure manner. This high-profile, "no-fail" mission has the utmost visibility in Iraq. It requires exact timing and compliance with strict protocol.

I received exceptional compliments, feedback and comments regarding the great attitude, enthusiasm and skill of these young Soldiers; surprisingly, the average age of one crew is 23 years old. These



**Heroic Efforts.** Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Stephens, commander of the Alaska Air National Guard's 212th Rescue Squadron, holds an eagle statue that was given to the rescue squadron by Sean O'Keefe, one of the survivors rescued by the Alaska Air National Guard from a plane crash near Dillingham in August 2010. The plaque on the statue reads: "To the Men & Women of the Alaska National Guard - With Deep Appreciation for Your Heroic Efforts on August 9-10, 2010, Sean O'Keefe." O'Keefe was rescued from the crash along with three others: Kevin O'Keefe, Jim Morhard and William Phillips Jr. Four others died in the accident. Pictured from left: Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard; Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Stephens, commander of the 212th Rescue Squadron; Staff Sergeant Zachary Kline, 212th Rescue Squadron; Brigadier General Deborah McManus, assistant adjutant general - Alaska Air National Guard. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, 176th Wing Public Affairs

Soldiers are about one-third through their deployment. They were motivated and excited about their missions. They had big shoes to fill, as the active duty unit they relieved had set the bar high with an extremely impressive standard.

It is also important to recognize the dedication and effort put forth by the men and women of our State Defense Force. In their capacity as a strategic reserve, they have transformed and remain a relevant component of our system of security and defense. This all-volunteer force maintains an esprit de corps second to none.

During my Iraq visit, several members commented on the phenomenal assistance

that our family support program has provided during unexpected emergencies and personal crises. Being away from family and loved ones is tough anytime, and especially during the holidays. Keeping all of our uniformed members in our thoughts and reaching out to thank them for their selfless service goes a long way. I can't emphasize enough how important it is to reach out and thank the uniformed members for the sacrifice they make on a daily basis to ensure our peace and security. Their extraordinary efforts demonstrate that they truly represent the greatest generation.

Thank you for what you do every day! ■



# Airman Saves Boy at Elmendorf Pool

By Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... National Guardsmen are well known for their willingness to help others at any place or time. For one young boy at the Elmendorf Fitness Center, that willingness to help may have saved his life in September.

Senior Airman Ferdie Villaflores, 176th Operations Support Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, dove into action when he saw a 12-year-old boy lying semiconscious at the bottom of the pool at the Elmendorf Fitness Center during open swim.

"I was on the side of the pool talking to a friend that I haven't seen in a long time," Villaflores said. "That's when I saw one of the lifeguards standing up pointing at something in the middle of the pool."

Villaflores spotted a small body lying at the bottom of the pool and immediately dove down as deep as he could to grab him. As soon as he got a hold on the boy, he swam up and helped him onto the pool deck.

"The only thing that was running through my mind was that I needed to get him out of the water as soon as possible," Villaflores said.

The boy had trouble breathing, so with the assistance of the on-duty lifeguard, Villaflores ensured that his airway was open. When he finally saw that the boy had regained full consciousness, he left the scene.

"I'm proud of him," said Senior Master Sergeant Douglas Echtenacht, 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard. "It may not be in our job description to save people from drowning, but I know I can expect him and other members of the Alaska Air National Guard to respond the way he did."



**Life Saver.** Senior Airman Ferdie Villaflores stands by the Elmendorf Fitness Center pool where he helped rescue a drowning boy during open swim in September.

Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

Villaflores, who spends a lot of his time at the Elmendorf pool said that he is really happy that he was there that night.

"I left after I saw the boy was okay," Villaflores said. "I didn't want to seem like the big hero because all that mattered to me is the boy lived." ■

An advertisement for Army ROTC programs. It features two soldiers in uniform saluting against a background of the American flag. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion around the soldiers. At the bottom, there is a yellow banner with contact information.

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# Dispatches from the Front...

## Deployment Days: ARMY GUARD AVIATORS in IRAQ



**Taking Flight.** Chief Warrant Officer Three Bryan Keese, B Company, 1-207th Aviation, prepares for a mission in Baghdad, Iraq, in November.

Photo: Chief Warrant Officer Two Chuck Baker, 1-207th Aviation

**Sandscape.** A UH-60 Black Hawk from the Alaska Army National Guard's B Company, 1-207th Aviation flies over Iraq during the unit's deployment. The mission of the unit is to transport distinguished visitors, cargo, equipment and personnel throughout the area. Photo: Courtesy 1-207th Aviation



**Support Mission.** Chief Warrant Officer Two Josh Cormier, left, and Chief Warrant Officer Three Bryan Keese, both of B Company, 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, are on a support mission in September for Lieutenant General Robert Cone, deputy commander for operations, U.S. Forces-Iraq, at Camp Echo, Iraq.

Photo: Captain Todd Miller, 1-207th Aviation



**Mission Ready.** Sergeant Donald Chapman, left, of Juneau, and Staff Sergeant Stephen Elliott Jr., of Palmer, stand next to their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter before heading out on a mission. They are deployed to Iraq in support of Operation

New Dawn and are members of the Alaska Army National Guard's B Company, 1-207th Aviation. Photo: Courtesy 1-207th Aviation



**Representing Alaska.** Soldiers from B Company, 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, proudly display the Alaska and U.S. flag in front of one of their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters while deployed to Iraq. The Guardsmen are expected home this fall. Photo: Courtesy 1-207th Aviation



# Where in the World

## Refueling Mission in Guam

By Airman Whitney Amstutz  
36th Wing Public Affairs

**ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam** ... Air National Guard tanker units from across the United States provide consecutive in-flight refueling operations for Andersen's current complement of deployed fighters, airlifters, and bombers in support of the continuous bomber presence and theater security packages in the Pacific region. During October, the 168th Air Refueling Wing from the Alaska Air National Guard took on the role.

"The Air National Guard is responsible for this mission," said Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Mrzena, commander of the 506th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron, which is composed of members from Air National Guard tanker units from across the United States. "It goes from one Air National Guard unit to the next. Every month we swap out and are responsible for supporting the mission from the first to the last day of that month."

In order for the transition to be smooth and effective, a regimented system is in place to guarantee all positions are manned and functional at all times.

"On the first jet, we send in all commanders, first sergeants and shop chiefs so that they can be properly indoctrinated on how everything works and what is needed to maintain the mission," Mrzena said. "Then, because our footprint has to remain the same, we swap out one for one — as one comes in to fill a certain position, the Airman who previously filled it leaves. We do this until the transition is complete."

Each Air National Guard unit remains on base for one month in their three-month activation window to fulfill the needs of the Air Force in a multitude of regions.

"Tankers are a high-value asset and are always in high demand," Mrzena said. "Many active duty tanker units are

**Push-Up Competition.** Soldiers with 2nd Platoon "Hell Raisers," 49th Missile Defense Battalion, compete in the physical fitness portion of the Military Police Squad Competition at Fort Greely in November. The goal of this competition was to offer realistic training that a Soldier may encounter throughout his or her career. The military police Soldiers were required to respond to various scenarios as first responders and leaders of their squad element throughout the 12-hour competition. Photo: Staff Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion



**Aerial Gas Station.** A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 168th Air Refueling Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, readies to refuel an F-15 while deployed to Guam. The 168th Air Refueling Wing supported the continuous bomber presence and theater security package in the Pacific region in October.

Photo: Airman Whitney Amstutz, U.S. Air Force

continuously present in the Central Command theater. The Air National Guard has also stepped up to provide relief in other areas of responsibility. The 506th EARS is an example. We are a full-time force fulfilling the needs in the Pacific theater seamlessly with part-time assets."

Members of the Guam Air National Guard also supported the Andersen mission in conjunction with the 168th.

"We have several Guam Air National Guard Airmen on our manning documents," said Chief Master Sergeant Mark Renson,



**Hometown Hero.** Colonel Donald S. Wenke, left, 168th Air Refueling Wing commander, and Chief Master Sergeant Tran Brunsberg, right, 168th Air Refueling Wing command chief, present a cherrywood-encased letter of appreciation and commemorative coins from the director and command chief of the Air National Guard to Staff Sergeant Monica Menninger for her deployment in support of contingency operations. The presentation was made in September during a Hometown Heroes Ceremony, a National Guard Bureau-funded campaign to recognize deployed Airmen.

Photo: Captain Maria Perkins, 168th Air Refueling Wing

168th Maintenance Squadron superintendent. "These individuals went through home-station training with our unit in Alaska, and for all intents and purposes, are a part of the Alaska Air National Guard."

During their stay on Andersen, the 168th was charged with the responsibility of training members of the Guam Air National Guard, as well as members of their own unit.

"We took this opportunity to hammer home whatever training we could," Renson said. "Our objective was to prepare these Airmen to accept the tanker tasking and ensure that the Air Force mission presses forward." ■





**Morin Khuur.** Sergeant Ouynbat presents Sergeant Major Jeffery Coker, Alaska Army National Guard, with a shadow box containing a replica of the Mongolian instrument morin khuur, or the Horse Head Fiddle, a symbol of Mongolia. Coker and Major Kyle Holt are Alaska Army National Guardsmen embedded liaisons with the Mongolian Expeditionary Task force in Afghanistan. Photo: Major Kyle Holt, Alaska Army National Guard/Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force Liaison



**Traveling Command and Control Center.** The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management's Mobile Emergency Operation Center sits in Turnagain Pass during the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group's annual winter search and rescue exercise in December. The Alaska Mountain Rescue Group utilized the MEOC as a command and control center using the satellite Internet connection, Internet phones, mapping capabilities, radio communications, briefing facilities and surveillance equipment.

Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs



### Independence Day Celebration.

The Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force, along with two Alaska Army National Guardsmen, all deployed to Afghanistan, celebrated Mongolia's Independence Day in November. The celebration included rifle exhibitions, sword demonstrations and music. Photo: Courtesy of Major Kyle Holt, Alaska Army National Guard/Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force Liaison

## Soldiers Celebrate Mongolian Independence Day

By Major Kyle Holt, Alaska Army National Guard Embedded Liaison, Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force

### CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan ...

Two Alaska Army National Guard members assigned as liaisons with the Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force celebrated Mongolia's Independence Day in November, an annual event that commemorates

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Mongolia's 1921 independence from China.

Colonel Batjargal, the Mongolian senior national representative for Operation Enduring Freedom XI, hosted the event, which included dignitaries from the Combined Security Training Command-Afghanistan and Task Force Rushmore (Camp Eggers). Mongolian soldiers gave exhibitions of rifle and sword use, music and a traditional performance called the Throat Song, or Hoomii.

An award ceremony rounded out the celebration with Mongolian soldiers receiving recognition for their accomplishments and leadership, akin to the U.S.

Army's Officer and Noncommissioned Officer of the Month awards.

In a surprise addition to the celebratory day, the two Alaska Army National Guard liaisons were presented with a shadow box containing a replica of the Mongolian instrument morin khuur, or the Horse Head Fiddle, a symbol of Mongolia. They are the third rotation of Alaska Guardsmen to embed with the Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force in Afghanistan, part of the expanding National Guard Bureau-initiated State Partnership Program between Mongolia and the Alaska National Guard. ■



# Santa & Mrs. Claus and the Guard Ring in the Holidays



By Private First Class Karina Paraoan  
DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** Flying in an Air Force C-17 Globemaster cargo jet instead of a sleigh and reindeer, Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and Santa's helpers arrived in St. Paul in early November as part of Operation Santa Claus.

The Alaska National Guard and many volunteer members from organizations such as the Salvation Army, Tastee Freez, Sadler's Home Furnishings and Costco teamed up for this year's 54th annual Operation Santa Claus, a yearly community relations and support program that provides toys, clothing, books, school supplies, fresh fruit and sundaes to children in communities across the state each year.

"This is a festive time of year where everyone involved in Operation Santa Claus looks forward to the revelry involved with visiting communities and families all across Alaska," said Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "We enjoy traveling to

our hometown communities and showing the Alaska National Guard's support for our fellow neighbors and Alaskans."

The event took place in St. Paul's city hall where the Alaska Guard members and volunteers set up tables for warm food, books and ice cream sundaes. Each child received a wrapped Christmas present from Santa and a goody bag filled with fresh fruit, little toys and cupcakes.

"This was the first time I brought my family to Operation Santa Claus, and it was very exciting," said Fannie Galanin, a St. Paul resident. "My grandson is a great believer in Santa, and it was very nice for everyone to put this together because I know he especially had a lot of fun."

"I have been volunteering for 20 years now, and I think this event is great," said Rick Renaud. "I still find it challenging to wrap the basketballs for children, but it's all worth it in the end."

This year Operation Santa Claus also visited Kokhanok, White Mountain, Little Diomed, Tanana, Pilot Station, Hoonah and Holy Cross. ■



**Holiday Cheer.** Mrs. Claus greets 3-year-old Glael Rukovishnikov, a resident of St. Paul, during an Operation Santa Claus visit to the village in November. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

**Holiday Hugs.** Santa greets the local children of Tanana village during an Operation Santa Claus visit in November. Photo: Captain Maria Perkins, 168th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs







**Unloading Meals.** Members of the Alaska Air National Guard and volunteers work together to unload the many tubs of food for the families of St. Paul during Operation Santa Claus in November. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs



**Frozen Treats.** Alaska Air National Guard Colonel Andy Mamrol, left, 176th Wing, and Brigadier General Randy Banez, assistant adjutant general-Alaska Army National Guard, prepare sundaes to give to the residents of St. Paul during Operation Santa Claus. The sundaes were provided by Rich Owens, owner of Taste Freez, a local family-owned eatery in Anchorage. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs



**Happy to be in St. Paul.** Santa, Mrs. Claus and 4-year-old Ethan Lestenkof-Mandregan stand in front of an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III after Santa and company landed in St. Paul for the 54th annual Operation Santa Claus. Overly joyful, Ethan was the first child to run to Santa.

Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs



# Joint Forces

Ready to Serve



## Alaska National Guard Assists



By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** The Alaska National Guard worked closely with production crews here in Alaska during the filming of a Universal Studios movie based on a whale rescue that captured the world's attention near the end of the Cold War.

The movie "Everybody Loves Whales," starring well known actors Drew Barrymore, Kristen Bell, Ted Danson, John Krasinski, Dermot Mulroney and Vinessa Shaw, brings together a Hollywood storyline with the true story of how people from around the globe came together in 1988 to free three gray whales trapped in arctic sea ice 18 miles northeast of Barrow.

The stranded whales were discovered Oct. 7, 1988, by an Alaska Inupiat hunter after changing weather conditions and shifting ice trapped them in shallow water before they began their journey south to warmer waters.



**Action.** An Alaska Army National Guardsman acting as a stand-in for the upcoming movie "Everybody Loves Whales" climbs the ladder of a CH-54 Skycrane helicopter during filming at Bryant Army Airfield in October. Stand-ins are used as temporary replacements for stars providing the production crew a chance to rehearse before filming.

Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

At the forefront of this international incident, the Alaska National Guard was pivotal in its role of helping to free the whales utilizing a CH-54 Skycrane helicopter, while working closely with members of President Ronald Reagan's administration and with the former Soviet Union.

Twenty-two years later, Hollywood has come to Alaska and has asked the Alaska National Guard to assist them in the filming of the movie.

"We usually have a Department of Defense representative from our Los Angeles office providing the coordination, advice and daily assistance to the production company," said Vicente "Vince" Ogilvie, deputy director of entertainment media, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. "However, for 'Everybody Loves Whales,' that role was provided by the Alaska National Guard."

A team of Alaska National Guardsmen worked daily to assist the production team with military scenes to ensure the accuracy, attention to detail and correct portrayal of the Alaska National Guard in 1988.

"It's great to work with Alaska National Guardsmen because they are part of the true story," said David Linck, unit publicist and spokesman for "Everybody Loves Whales." "If it wasn't for National Guardsmen like Tom Carroll this may have never happened."

Carroll, former commander of the Alaska Army National Guard, who tragically died in a plane crash in 1992, is the inspiration for Dermot Mulroney's character in the movie, Colonel Boyer. Carroll was an Alaska Army National Guardsman who played a pivotal role during the whale rescue.

"It's important we get this right. Even though we're not making a documentary,



❶ **Star Sightings.** Captain Amy Slinker, commander of the 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard, poses with Mary Steenburgen and Ted Danson during a meet-and-greet event held in November with the cast of "Everybody Loves Whales." Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

❷ **Getting Camera Ready.** Private First Class Matthew Blanchett, right, 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard, assists Second Lieutenant Charity Mollison, 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, with the correct wear of 1980s-era Army headgear in preparation for a scene in the upcoming movie "Everybody Loves Whales." Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

we're still doing a story of real events that happened in 1988 in Barrow," Linck said. "It's always a plus working with the military because this lends us an air of truth."

With scenes shot all over Alaska, Guardsmen definitely got the opportunity to assist in the filming of the movie.

Just ask Alaska Air National Guardsman Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, who interacted with the cast and crew daily as one of two Department of Defense project officers or Private First Class Karina Paraoan, who was one of many Guardsmen cast as an extra in the movie. They got the chance at a once-in-a-lifetime experience and enjoyed every minute of it.

"It was an honor to be a part of this project," said Kale, a member of the 176th Wing. "The production company was a pleasure to work with, and they were very open to our suggestions. The fact they also wanted to use Alaska National Guard members as extras and enlisted our help to ensure every military scene was accurate, speaks volumes to their desire in wanting to get it right."

The movie also presented a key opportunity to highlight the National Guard, a first, according to Ogilvie.

"In my tenure, this is the first movie centered on a mission that was exclusively National Guard and supported by the National Guard," Ogilvie said. "This movie presented us a unique opportunity to work with the production company, and the support from them and the Alaska National Guard has been phenomenal."



**Costume Coordination.** Alaska Army National Guard State Command Sergeant Major Gordon Choate, left, prepares a pair of Army cold weather gloves to be worn by an Alaska National Guardsman as an extra in the upcoming movie "Everybody Loves Whales." A team of Alaska National Guardsmen worked daily to assist the production team with the military scenes to ensure the accuracy, attention to detail and correct portrayal of the Alaska National Guard in 1988. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

The feeling is mutual and is reflected in the attention to detail, accuracy and portrayal of the National Guard by the production company.

"We're very happy to work with the Alaska National Guard. We were treated well and I hope it's a relationship that continues to grow for the film community and the National Guard here in Alaska," Linck said.

"Everybody Loves Whales," filmed in Alaska until late November, is scheduled to be released to movie theaters in 2012. ■

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# Environmental

## GUARDING the Environment

**Taking out the Trash.** Sergeant First Class Elaine Jackson, left, Alaska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention operations noncommissioned officer, and Private First Class Ryan Johnson, Recruiting and Retention Mobile Event Team member, remove debris during operation "Guard the Environment" held at the Goose Bay State Game Refuge in October. Photo: Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment



By Private First Class Karina Paraoan  
DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** Twenty-five Alaska National Guardsmen and 35 recruits from the Alaska Army National Guard's Recruit Sustainment Program partnered with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to clean the Goose Bay State Game Refuge during a "Guard the Environment" event in October.

"Guard the Environment" is a National Guard program that encourages members to proactively participate in environmentally friendly activities, impact the environment in a positive way, give back to their local communities and train its members to be supportive stewards of the environment.

Environmentally friendly activities include community recycling efforts, planting trees or other appropriate vegetation, and cleaning up local neighborhoods, parks and trails.

"I think the 'Guard the Environment' events are important because it shows that we not only care about our community, but we do what we can to take care of it as well," said Staff Sergeant Michael Wright, drill sergeant, Alaska National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command.

Guardsmen, recruits and 12 members of the Department of Fish and Game spent an entire day cleaning the wooded area and shore of Goose Bay. Eight old abandoned vehicles were removed from the shore and hundreds of yellow trash bags and large metal trash bins were filled with waste ranging from old shoes, cans, and cardboard to refrigerators and computers.

Joe Meehan, refuge manager, Department of Fish and Game, said that the total amount of waste removed was about 20 tons.

"I'm proud to be a part of a team that is helping the environment and making it better for our citizens and wildlife to enjoy," said Specialist Jamie Ledbetter, a recruit with the Alaska Army National Guard's Recruit Sustainment Program. "I already feel like a National Guardsman because I'm doing what they do, which is to help out the community when they can. It's truly a great feeling." ■

**Outdoor Clean Up.** Soldiers assigned to the 207th Combat Support Company, Alaska Army National Guard, release the Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck Wrecker crane hook from a rusted vehicle at Goose Bay State Game Refuge during the "Guard the Environment" event. From left: Staff Sergeant Joseluis Villaseñor, wheeled vehicle mechanic; Staff Sergeant Edwin Brunner, motor transport operator; and Specialist Ryan Graney, wheeled vehicle mechanic.

Photo: Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment





# Guardsmen Help Clean Up Illegal Dump Site

By Staff Sergeant Karima Turner  
DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... Volunteers from the Alaska National Guard and other local organizations joined in a community effort to help clean up an estimated 60 tons of trash from an illegal dump site north of Palmer in September.

The decades-old illegal dump site that dates back to the 1960s was discovered by an Anchorage dirt biker off Jonesville Mine Road north of Palmer in July.

When the state was unable to clean up the site, some individuals, businesses and organizations decided to do something about it.

"Three of our Soldiers volunteered to take time out of their personal lives and go out and help the Sutton community," said Sergeant First Class Timothy Smith, maintenance platoon sergeant.

Specialist David Dirkes, Specialist Ethan Carrico and Private First Class Serita Johnson are all driven by service, whether it's serving their state and country in the Alaska Army National Guard or spending a day picking up trash.

"I'm not surprised that they did this because all three of them are very helpful

and they are the kind of people who go out of their way to help people," Smith said. "They are outstanding people and Soldiers who go out of the way to help our communities."

The three Guard members, from Eagle River and Wasilla, traveled to the Sutton community and spent the day removing more than 100,000 pounds of trash from the illegal dump site.

"This was my way of re-connecting with the community," said Johnson, a generator mechanic for 207th Combat Support Company. "We get so caught up in our day-to-day lives, we forget to reach out and get involved in our communities, and that is really important to me."

"The site was encroaching onto the four-wheeling trails out there," said Carrico, a wheeled vehicle mechanic for the 207th Combat Support Company. "One of my favorite things to do is go four-wheeling, and I use the Sutton trails a lot, so I was happy to make the area a safer place for other riders."

Many businesses also contributed to the cleanup effort, donating money, supplies, equipment and lunch to assist the volunteer efforts.



**Environmental Stewards.** From left: Alaska Army National Guard Specialist David Dirkes, wheeled vehicle mechanic; Private First Class Serita Johnson, generator mechanic; and Specialist Ethan Carrico, wheeled vehicle mechanic, give back to their community through service. The three Guardsmen, all from the 207th Combat Support Company, volunteered to spend a day helping the Sutton community in the cleanup of an illegal dumpsite.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

"I think it's important that as National Guardsmen we give back to our communities, not only through military service but also through community involvement," said Dirkes, a wheeled vehicle mechanic for 207th Combat Support Company. "I think it builds the community's confidence in the Guard and helps them to see us as solid members of the community." ■

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**Welcome Home.** Guard members from the 168th Air Refueling Wing are welcomed home to Eielson Air Force Base after a deployment to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. The Airmen were deployed for approximately two months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and New Dawn. Photo: Courtesy of the 168th Air Refueling Wing





# ALASKA AIR GUARDSMEN RETURN FROM QATAR

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** Fifty-three Alaska National Guardsmen from the 168th Air Refueling Wing returned to Alaska in early January after a deployment to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn.

The Guardsmen, who left Alaska in November, joined the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron, supporting air refueling missions as part of the world's largest KC-135 Squadron in support of war taskings.

Members of the unit included personnel from operations, maintenance, life support and the medical group.

The unit immediately had an impact on missions, supporting both U.S. and

**Deployment Return.** Lieutenant Colonel Matt Mrzena, left, 168th Air Refueling Wing pilot, talks to Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Kenaston, 168th Operations Group commander after returning in January from a deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and New Dawn. Mrzena was one of 53 Alaska National Guardsmen from the 168th Air Refueling Wing who deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

Photo: Courtesy of the 168th Air Refueling Wing



coalition aircraft by flying 120 combat missions and offloading eight million pounds of fuel. This enabled nine strike missions and supported troops in direct contact with enemy forces 101 times throughout the deployment.

"These 53 heroes returned home to Alaska after successfully executing their mission with excellence, sacrifice and integrity," said Colonel Scott Wenke, 168th

Air Refueling Wing commander. "They exemplify the true spirit of selfless service and represented the Alaska Air National Guard in an extremely professional manner."

The only Arctic region refueling unit for all of Pacific Air Forces, the 168th Air Refueling Wing at Eielson Air Force Base transfers more fuel than any other Air National Guard tanker wing. ■



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# Guard Receives New Equipment to Stay Ready, Reliable

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** The Alaska Army National Guard is the proud owner of new individual and unit-level equipment worth tens of millions of dollars. From state-of-the-art Army combat helmets to brand new up-armored vehicles, the National Guard boasts the best and newest equipment.

“Ensuring that our Soldiers have the best equipment has always been a priority,” said Brigadier General Randy Banez, assistant adjutant general-Alaska Army National Guard. “Whether supporting our state or our country, it is crucial to the mission that our Soldiers are equipped and trained on the very latest equipment and technology.”

For the past two years, the Alaska Army National Guard reorganized its legacy forces of units, such as the 207th Infantry Group, into the current and more viable



**New Equipment.** The Alaska Army National Guard received millions of dollars in new equipment recently, like these up-armored Humvees, to keep it current, ready and reliable to serve here in Alaska or overseas.

297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and 38th Troop Command, as well as new smaller units.

With the reorganization, the entire Alaska Army National Guard logistics team, with key support from the G3 force integration office, has prepared for the equipment tidal wave for the 21st century Army Guard.

“The time has come, and the Alaska Army National Guard is riding that tidal wave,” said Colonel Mike Bridges, Alaska Army National Guard logistics officer in charge. “The new weapons systems, communications systems, night vision devices, logistics tracking systems, including satellite tracking devices, hundreds of new trucks, trailers, generators and everything our modern Army Guard needs to

fight in combat and support the homeland in domestic emergencies will ensure a safer, better equipped and better trained unit.”

The Army Guard has acquired nearly 200 new trucks of all configurations, more than 100 of the newest tactical quiet generators, aviation unique generators and field heaters and more than 200 trailers. In addition to that, more than \$1 million of new Soldier organization clothing and individual equipment now stocks the clothing and issue facility.

“This equipment provides an exceptional opportunity for our young Soldiers to work on the newest and best equipment and will keep the Alaska Army National Guard ready and reliable to respond to emergencies when Alaskans need us most,” Bridges said. ■

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**Airborne.** Private Axel Joe, left, and Specialist Joe Pete, both from B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne, Alaska Army National Guard, prepare to jump from a UH-60 Black Hawk during a joint airborne operation in Bethel. Photo: Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

# Army Guardsmen Perform Joint Airborne Operation

By Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

**BETHEL, Alaska** ... Approximately 20 National Guard Soldiers and active duty Army Soldiers made history in November during a joint airborne operation in Bethel, Alaska.

Eleven Alaska National Guardsmen from B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne were the first to jump into the Bethel Flats Rotary Wing Drop Zone from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

"This was one of the milestones for building this company," said First Lieutenant Jason Caldwell, commander, B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne.

B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne, became the newest airborne unit in the Alaska Army National Guard in May, when they officially stood up. Caldwell said this training event was important toward keeping his Soldiers proficient in airborne operations in order to better serve the state of Alaska.

He said it was humbling to see all the support he received from numerous state and local organizations including the FAA, the Department of Transportation, the Bethel Native Corporation, Bethel Utilities Corp. and the Bethel Fire Department.

"There were a lot of people working very hard to make this operation a success, both military and civilian," Caldwell said.

Soldiers assigned to the 4th Quartermaster Detachment stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, provided riggers and supplied parachutes. A jump master team with the

**Frozen Drop Zone.** Alaska Army National Guardsmen assigned to B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne land on the Bethel Flats Rotary Wing Drop Zone in November during a joint airborne operation in Bethel. Photo: Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment



Texas National Guard also traveled to Bethel to participate in the operation.

"I'm really happy for my Soldiers, this was a big deal for them," Caldwell said.

Specialist David Smart, an Alaska Native from Hooper Bay, assigned to B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne, said his family, specifically his mom, Elvena Smart, and father, Earl Atchak, were excited about his participation in the jump.

"They are all excited, but my mom was nervous," Smart said. "I gave her my airborne wings, and she wears them every day."

His parents were unable to see the jump, but said they were proud of their son for serving his country and Alaska.

"A lot of people who know him and our family are very proud of him," Elvena Smart said.

Smart's family history with the military traces back to before Alaska was a state, when both of his grandfathers served in the Alaska Territorial Guard. Several of his brothers and sisters are currently serving or have served in the military as well.

Smart said he joined the Alaska Army National Guard to continue a family tradition of serving his country.

"I wanted to keep it in the family," Smart said.

Atchak said his son found his place when he joined the Guard.

"It was like he was born to be in the National Guard," Atchak said. ■



**Jump Preparations.** Sergeant First Class Jimmy Flanigan, back, jump master, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-143rd Airborne Infantry, Texas Army National Guard, gives a signal to Alaska Army National Guardsmen assigned to B Company, 1-143rd Airborne Infantry during a pre-jump exercise before the first airborne operation at the Bethel Flats Rotary Wing Drop Zone. From left: First Lieutenant Jason Caldwell, commander; Sergeant Eric Pavil, infantryman; and Specialist David Smart, infantryman. Photo: Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment





# Veterans



**Remembering Past Service.** Members of the former Alaska Territorial Guard flank the newly unveiled Alaska Territorial Guard statue in Nome on Alaska Day. The new statue honors the Alaska Territorial Guard and stands in front of the Old Federal Building on Front Street. Photo: Lieutenant Colonel John Woyte, Alaska Army National Guard

## HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED

By Verdie Bowen, State Veterans Affairs Office

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** As long as we have been a nation, we as Americans have expressed our commitment to honor those who have served or currently serve our country. We believe and live by one of the great quotes of former President Calvin Coolidge: *"A nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten."*

Thankfully, it is not uncommon to see strangers bestow honor and respect to men and women in uniform with a smile or thank you. It is a reflection of how the citizens of our nation remember the words of Coolidge and an affirmation that we will continue to thrive as a country for years to come.

The 2010 Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award winner is a Korean War veteran who lives to help his fellow veterans. Roy Burkart sends hundreds of care packages to deployed troops and helps wounded warriors and disabled veterans participate in hunting trips across Alaska. He lives in Willow and nearly every Monday evening, he sits on Main Street in Wasilla holding flags and welcoming veterans home. He's a true patriot.

Travelling to communities around the state, I love listening to veterans tell stories of their time serving the nation. They represent the true spirit of Alaska, and we are blessed to have so many role models in our communities.

With Alaska having the largest per capita veteran population in the nation at roughly 77,000, it is easy to find veterans close to home. In fact, Alaska has veterans from all conflicts since World War II, with the largest group

having served during the Vietnam War. It is an honor to have so many veterans living in Alaska who have served our nation so selflessly.

I recently attended the dedication of a new U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community Base Outpatient Clinic in Juneau, and to say the veterans in attendance were excited about the new clinic would be an understatement. It was a culmination of efforts, led by hard work and determination that some dedicated the last 40 years of their lives to ensure this day would arrive. We now have five VA clinics. What a wonderful example of veterans helping veterans and how we are moving in the right direction. ■



**VA Clinic Dedication.** Officials cut the ribbon during the dedication ceremony of the newly opened U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community Base Outpatient Clinic in Juneau in September. From left: Verdie Bowen, State of Alaska Veterans Affairs Office administrator; George Northcroft, U.S. General Services administrator; Elizabeth Bochynski, clinic nurse manager; Specialist Jayce Edwards, Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran; Willard Jackson, Vietnam War veteran; Alex Spector, Alaska VA Healthcare director; Bruce Botelho, Juneau mayor; Captain Melissa Bert, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Juneau commander.





**In Honor of the Fallen.** Major General Thomas H. Katkus, left, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, and Verdie Bowen, state veterans affairs administrator, lay a wreath in honor of fallen veterans during the Canadian Forces Remembrance Day ceremony held at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery Nov. 11. Wreaths were also placed during the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Veterans Day ceremony held immediately preceding this outdoor ceremony. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs



**Tribute Melody.** Dan Henderson walks down a line of gravestones while playing a traditional Canadian song in honor of fallen veterans during the Canadian Forces Remembrance Day ceremony held at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery Nov. 11. The Canadian Forces program complemented the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Veterans Day ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Army earlier that day. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

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# ALASKA NATIONAL GUARDSMAN REIGNS AS BOXER

Story and photos by Private First Class Karina Paroan, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... An Alaska Army National Guardsman demonstrated just how strong a Soldier can be when she competed in and won her first boxing match in October.

Specialist Michelle Nash, with the 134th Public Affairs Detachment, represented the Alaska Army National Guard by competing as "The Guardian" in Thursday Night at the Fights at the Egan Civic and Convention Center in Anchorage.

Thursday Night at the Fights is an amateur boxing league hosted by Jerry Miller Sr. and co-sponsored by the Alaska Army National Guard. The fights are open to

those who are interested in competing, regardless of experience.

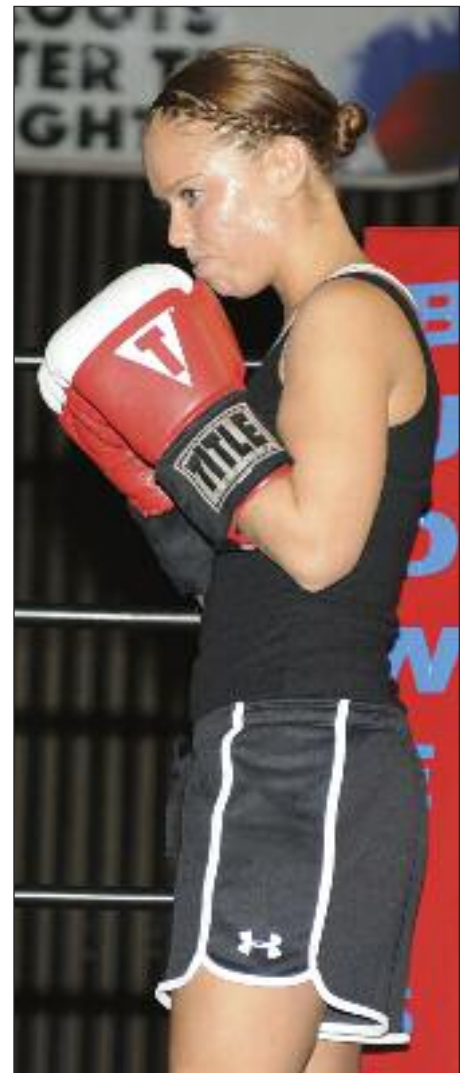
"I went to the fights in October and expressed my interest in fighting," Nash said. "By chance, Samantha Sams, another applicant, was at the fights and interested in fighting. Since we were about the same height and weight, Jerry asked if we wanted to fight the next week, and we both said yes."

With only one week to train for her first match, Nash pushed herself to become physically and mentally prepared as a fighter.

"I was doing cardio every day and ran three to four miles with two- to three-pound weights," Nash said.



**Winning Moves.** Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard, left, jabs her opponent, Samantha Sams, also known as "Little Chief," during Thursday Night at the Fights. Nash won the fight by unanimous decision.



**Mental Toughness.** Specialist Michelle Nash, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard, takes a moment to prepare herself before facing her opponent in her first boxing match during Thursday Night at the Fights.

She also said she attended power boxing classes and met with her trainer for individual boxing sessions.

With the support of her fellow Guardsmen and family, including her father, Alaska Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major Clinton Brown, Nash headed into her first fight with confidence and determination.

"The Army National Guard trains warriors for combat operations, and Specialist Nash proved that the warrior spirit is gender neutral," Brown said. "Her performance as a competitor at the Thursday Night Fights is a testament to the capabilities and honor of our Soldiers. She was a great example for the Alaska Army National Guard."

After three rounds of fighting, Nash won her first match by unanimous decision. She intends to continue to train and compete in Thursday Night at the Fights. ■



# Guardsman Takes 2nd Place in STRONGMAN Competition

Story and photos by Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... An Alaska National Guardsman placed 2nd in the first official Alaska Strongman of the North 2010 competition held at the Egan Civic and Convention Center in Anchorage in November.

Master Sergeant John Nieves, recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer in charge, Recruiting and Retention Command, Alaska Army National Guard, competed against eight men from all over Alaska while wearing camouflage pants and combat boots to symbolize that he is a Guardsman.

"This competition is a testament to his dedication to fitness and provides a great example for others to follow," said Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Lawendowski, commander, Recruiting and Retention Command, Alaska Army National Guard. "He truly represents the Alaska National Guard."

The Strongman competition consisted of five events: 18-inch dead lift, farmer's walk, dumbbell clean press, front hold and truck pull.

The 18-inch deadlift tests how much weight the competitor can lift from the ground to his chest. The farmer's walk requires the competitor to hold 250-lb dumbbells in each hand, walk 100 feet, turn around and walk back in the fastest possible time. The dumbbell clean press tests how many repetitions the competitor can lift and hold a 120-lb dumbbell above his head and bring it back down within 60 seconds. The front hold tests how long the competitor can hold a 45-lb Olympic plate straight out above his chin while standing against a wall. Lastly, the truck pull tests how fast and far the competitor can pull a Hummer 100 feet toward him while sitting down.

Nieves had been training for the competition six days a week with intense and heavy work outs for 30 days.

"Being a Soldier and having the 'never quit' attitude is what I think sets me apart from the civilian competitors," Nieves said.

From 2002 to 2008, Nieves competed every year at Buckner Physical Fitness Center's bench press competitions on Fort Richardson, taking 1st place each time. ■

## More Than Weightlifting.

Demonstrating his strength, Master Sergeant John Nieves, recruiting and retention non-commissioned officer in charge, Recruiting and Retention Command, Alaska Army National Guard, lifts a 125-lb dumbbell above his head during the dumbbell clean press event of the Strongman of the North competition.

## Guard's Strongman.

Master Sergeant John Nieves, recruiting and retention non-commissioned officer in charge, Recruiting and Retention Command, Alaska Army National Guard, gets ready for the Strongman of the North competition held at the Egan Civic and Convention Center in November.





# Alaska Guardsmen Recognize Veterans with Final Honor

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... The Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team conducted 290 funerals in 2010, 109 more than 2009 and is projected to support 400 in 2011.

The program, which began in 2007, is supported by Alaska National Guardsmen and conducts funeral honors for all branches of service, but focuses mainly on Army, Army National Guard and Alaska Territorial Guard members.

"We provide military funeral honors to all veterans across the state of Alaska," said Norman Hood, Alaska National Guard honor guard state coordinator. "We are doing the right thing, for the right reason, for the right people."

In 2010, the Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team conducted 99 Alaska Territorial Guard funeral honors, supporting Alaska veterans who were organized in 1942 by Alaska Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening in response to attacks by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941.

Ranging in age from 11 to 80 years old, these brave men and women faithfully guarded their assigned territory, with no pay and little equipment. In 2000, the late Senator Ted Stevens introduced legislation that changed law and officially recognized the members of the Alaska Territorial Guard for their service, making them eligible for military funeral honors.

According to Hood, since October 2010, the honors team has performed 76 Alaska Territorial Guard military funeral honors across the state. A sign the "greatest generation" is passing away in



**Flag Presentation.** Members of the Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team fold the U.S. flag during a ceremony in Akiachak honoring Alaska Territorial Guard members who never received military funeral honors. The Guardsmen travelled to Akiachak to present the flag to family members and honor those who've served their state and country. Photo: Courtesy of the Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team



**Funeral Honors.** Specialist Spencer Sheals, of the Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team, presents the U.S. flag to a family member during a ceremony in Napakiak honoring Alaska Territorial Guard members who never received military funeral honors. Sheals travelled to Napakiak on snowmachine to present the flag to family members and provide the honors. Photo: Courtesy of the Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team

larger numbers and also signifies their outreach efforts to contact veterans and their families is working because more people are requesting their support.

"When we go out to a village, we take records of people who've requested funeral honors, as well as ATG members with no request and ATG members who haven't submitted any paperwork to receive their official discharge. Our goal is to contact as many people as possible because they may not be aware of our program and they deserve to be honored."

Hood, who took over the position in May 2010, has also worked hard to build relationships with veteran service organizations, funeral directors and community members throughout Alaska to make the program more visible.

"The key is to build relationships with funeral directors and veteran organizations, so they're aware were here to help, and then I work through them to make sure the families know too. I've even certified 40 members of different veteran service organization to help assist in funeral honors."

Currently, the team has 103 active or retired Guardsmen who serve in the Alaska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team, but Hood is always looking for more Guardsmen interested in joining.



*"We provide  
military  
funeral honors  
to all veterans  
across the state  
of Alaska.  
We are doing  
the right thing,  
for the right reason,  
for the right people."*

— Norman Hood,  
Alaska National Guard  
honor guard state coordinator

"To me, this is one of the most rewarding things you can do, and joining helps the Guard build a stronger team."

In Alaska, with few roads and a harsh, unforgiving landscape, just getting to these villages can be a challenge, but according to Hood, they'll find a way.

"We live in Alaska, so most of the time we have to travel by air, but if there aren't any aviation assets available, our team will jump on a snowmachine and do whatever it takes to get there."

In December 2010, military funeral honor team members did just that, riding snowmachines from Bethel to four remote villages in western Alaska in the dead of winter where temperatures can dip to 50 below zero to honor fallen ATG members.

"I'm a retired Soldier and a son of a veteran, so it means a lot to me to honor these veterans who served their state and country. That's why we make every effort to get out to every community because they deserve our gratitude for their service." ■

*Veterans with honorable military discharges and retired veterans with honorable military discharges are eligible for military funeral honors.*



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# Homeland Security & Emergency Management



## DHS&EM Launches Responder Ready Campaign

By Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... A simulated tsunami in October put military and civilian responders to the test, gauging how well responders are prepared to act in the face of disaster. Alaska Army National Guard members from B Troop, 297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance, teamed up with the Kenai Fire Department and Kenai Community Emergency Response Team volunteers to exercise their unified response to a simulated tsunami and rescue of victims at a beach site, harbor, wooded area, fish processing plant and sewage treatment plant.

The exercise demonstrated the effectiveness of a joint response and the use of each organization's strengths to accomplish the exercise goals. Had this been an actual event, first responders living in the affected area would have been torn between ensuring that their family, friends and neighborhoods were safe and reporting for duty.

Studies since Sept. 11, 2001, indicate emergency responders may be no better prepared for catastrophic events than the general public.

**Joint Exercise for a Joint Response.** The Kenai Community Emergency Response Team calls upon the Alaska Army National Guard's communications and transportation capabilities. The one-day exercise strengthened the bond between Citizen Soldiers and citizen responders. Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs



**Mount Up.** Kenai Community Emergency Response Team members load into an Alaska Army National Guard vehicle for transportation to exercise locations. This was the first time that the Kenai CERT conducted a joint exercise with the Guard. Photo: Glenda Landua, Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management



**Life-saving Response.** The Alaska Army National Guard practices life-saving techniques with the Valdez Fire Department during the 2010 Alaska Shield-Vigilant Guard-Arctic Edge exercise. Even in a small community, response to a catastrophic disaster requires a large number of trained responders. Photo: Mike Drummond, DHS&EM

This fall, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management launched the Responder Ready campaign to increase awareness and provide tools for first responders and other critical employees to prepare themselves and their families for disasters.

"Guard families are adept at effectively handling routine emergencies and long-term deployment. However, the call to action becomes increasingly difficult when those first responders are at home when disaster strikes in their communities," said Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. "Preparing with their families ensures Guard members will be ready for any event."

To introduce Alaska's emergency response community to the Responder Ready campaign, DHS&EM is presenting the campaign to emergency response leaders at statewide events such as the Alaska State Firefighters Conference.

"Emergency responders are individuals who know their community, have proven themselves under pressure and are fully committed to helping their neighbors; they are irreplaceable," said Rob Fitch, deputy director of the Anchorage Office of Emergency Management.



“When a major disaster takes place, we will need every last emergency responder we can get.”

To help emergency responders and their families prepare for the next major disaster, DHS&EM has developed Alaska-specific preparedness material and is partnering with emergency response agencies to deliver the Responder Ready message. The Responder Ready program highlights the need for families to plan together, organize important documents, protect irreplaceable items and build a 7-day emergency supply kit.

The Responder Ready campaign is critical to Alaska where different types of disasters present big challenges.

The magnitude 9.2 1964 Good Friday Earthquake was the second largest earthquake ever recorded. Annually, Alaska averages 12,000 earthquakes.

Floods, heavy rains, volcanoes, fires, sea storms, high winds, industrial accidents, avalanches, landslides, tsunamis and other disasters regularly threaten the lives and property of Alaskans.

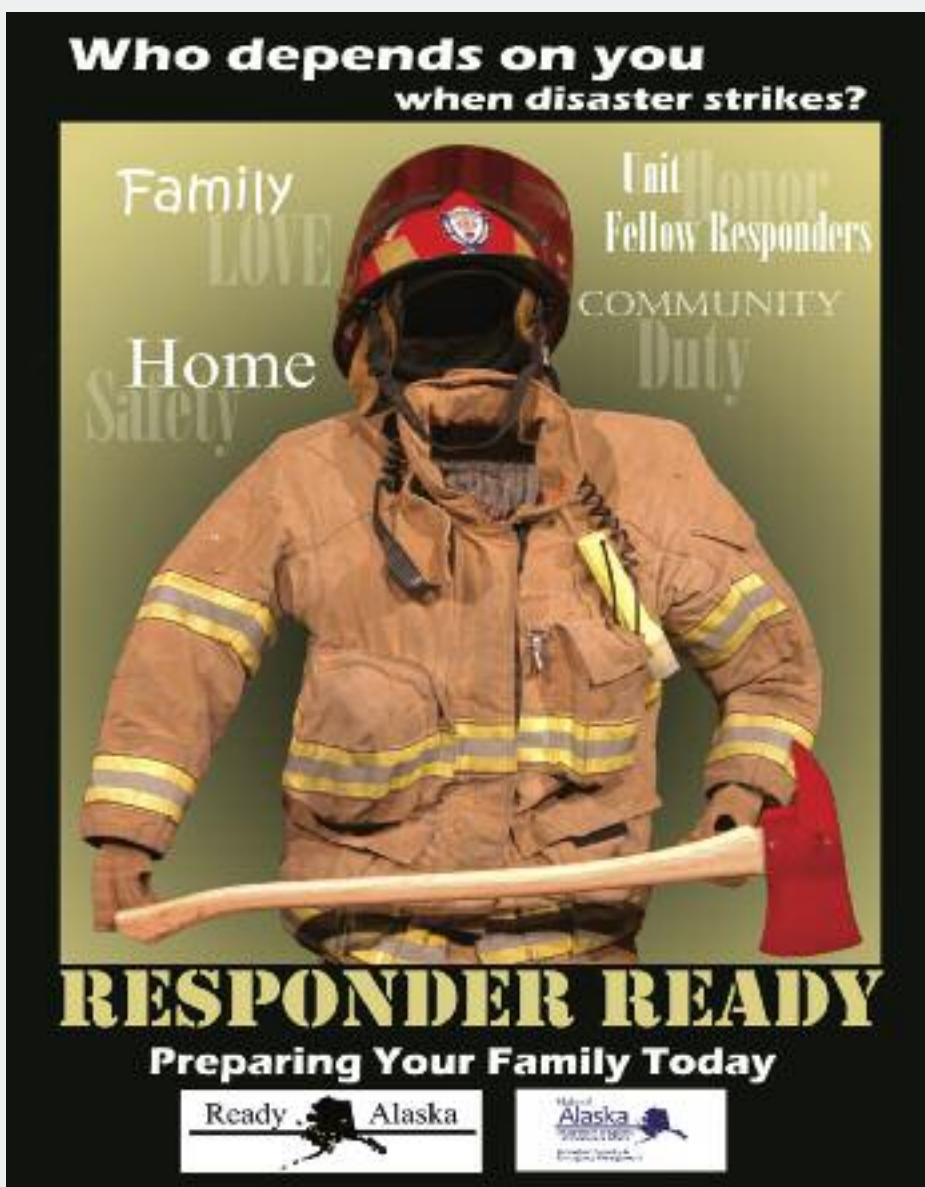
“Catastrophic disaster brings many unknowns,” said John Madden, director of DHS&EM. “What we can say with certainty is responder families who embrace the Responder Ready concepts will know what to do when disaster strikes. They can have confidence in their plan to communicate, reunite and independently endure the disaster until services are restored. This is the peace of mind everyone wants.”

For more information on preparing yourself and your family for disaster and to view the Kenai CERT exercise video, visit [www.ready.alaska.gov](http://www.ready.alaska.gov). ■



## Call to Action Things to do Today

- **Gather information about your community.** Discover the hazards within your community; then take steps in and around your home to minimize identified risks. Start by securing shelves to walls, installing water heater straps, locating utility shut off valves and creating a defensible fire space around your home.
- **Develop a Family Emergency Plan.** Before disaster strikes, determine where family members and pets will go and whom they will call. Practice a home evacuation plan, a shelter-in-place plan and actions like drop, cover and hold during an earthquake. Update and review your Family Emergency Plan on a regular basis.
- **Build a Family Emergency Kit.** Have essential supplies on hand to last seven days. Include water, food, battery-powered radio, flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit, whistle, dust masks, duct tape, plastic sheeting, clean up and hygiene supplies, tools, an indoor-safe heat source, local maps, and other necessary items such as medications and pet supplies. Check expiration dates and replace items as needed.
- **Stay Informed.** Be aware of developing emergency situations and take the necessary measures to minimize the impact. Prepare your family to initiate your well-developed emergency plan. ■



**Responder Ready.** The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's Responder Ready campaign will work with organizations to produce posters specific to each discipline. The inaugural poster was developed for firefighters and released this fall at the Alaska State Firefighters Conference. Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM





## ***“Best Warrior” Competition Strengthens Unit***

Story and photos by Specialist Michelle Nash  
134th Public Affairs Detachment

**FORT GREELY, Alaska** ... Six Alaska Army National Guardsmen proved their discipline and proficiency in their warrior tasks during the 49th Missile Defense Battalion “Best Warrior” competition here in November.

The “Best Warrior” competition is designed to test the physical and mental toughness of each participant and to identify the best Soldier and noncommissioned officer.

Although two prestigious titles were on the line, the Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Platoon, A Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, worked together to overcome each challenge during the event.

“Everyone is motivating each other,” said Sergeant Christopher Thomas, one of the NCO participants. “It’s not so much of an individual competition but a chance to see everyone excel in something different.”

The Soldiers, also known as the “Hell Raisers,” filled the atmosphere with camaraderie and teamwork, while demonstrating how a healthy competition can strengthen a unit.

“I believe heavy competition brings an esprit de corps that you can’t reach without it,” said Sergeant First Class Maureen Meehan, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. “The Soldiers have a daily mission that has a strict routine. This changes that routine up and brings back their warrior spirit and a healthy drive to compete against each other but also in turn, make each other better.”

Meehan said she was extremely proud of her Soldiers for volunteering to participate in the event and motivating themselves to train on their free time and during the mission.

“Since the Missile Defense Complex operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Soldiers faced a unique challenge while



**Pressing for the Title.** Specialist Ernesto Ventura, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 49th Missile Defense, completes a bench press while First Lieutenant Ryan Skaw spots him during the 49th Missile Defense “Best Warrior” competition. At the end of the competition, Ventura was named “Best Soldier.”



**Push-up Power.** Specialist Robert Haas, right, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, military police officer, completes a pushup while Sergeant First Class Jacqueline Tyson, 49th Missile Defense Battalion training and operations noncommissioned officer in charge, grades the event during the 49th Missile Defense Battalion “Best Warrior” competition.





**Enduring the Elements.** Private First Class Lyarnell Harris, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, races to the end point of a five-mile ruck march during the 49th Missile Defense "Best Warrior" competition.

training for the competition," said Command Sergeant Major Bradford Quigley, 49th Missile Defense Battalion.

The challenge was overcome with a strategic balance between the mission and training for the event.

"We set this up to be a premier event," Quigley said. "We wanted this to be as challenging as possible, so once they win here, they know what they need to work on and have the confidence going on to the next round."

During the competition, Soldiers were faced with the challenges of a written exam, physical fitness tests, drill and ceremony, board interviews, weapons familiarization, a shooting evaluation, and warrior tasks such as evaluating a casualty and land navigation.

The Soldiers also completed a strenuous five-mile march with full rucksacks, where they combated snow, wind and temperatures below freezing.

Specialist Ernesto Ventura was named "Best Soldier" and Sergeant Christopher Thomas was named "Best Noncommissioned Officer." ■

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# Education

## Vocational Training Gives Cadets an Educational Edge

By Alaska Military Youth Academy Staff

**CAMP CARROLL, Alaska** ... Alaska Military Youth Academy cadets receive more than a second chance to redirect their future; they also receive specialized vocational training to propel their future.

Through an agreement with the University of Alaska Anchorage Community and Technical College's Career and Technical Education Program in the Job Skills Core Component, cadets can expand their vocational and technical education.

During the residential phase of the program, cadets selected for the Culinary Arts offering receive an opportunity to earn their national ServSafe® Certification once they pass the test with a 75 percent score or higher. This course teaches them the basic skills of sanitation, ordering, receiving, prepping, cooking and serving throughout the food service process.

Each food establishment must employ at least one certified limited food protection manager for each location who is an active on-site person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the establishment. Cadets also receive two transferable credits toward their college degree through UAA and the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The final stepping stone for the cadets to showcase their newly acquired skills is AMYA's version of the "Iron Chef" competition with two teams vying for the best cuisine in front of a panel of judges. They are critiqued on presentation, taste and creativity, which pushes cadets to prepare some extraordinary meals.

As part of the Cooperative Work Experience program, selected cadets participate in Emergency Trauma Technician and National Center for Construction Education and Research certification programs that lead to the award of college credits along with entry-level credentials to work in their respective fields.



**Water Survival.** Cadets from 4th Platoon of Class 2011-01 use their trousers as make flotation devices as part of drown-proof training in November at Buckner Physical Fitness Center where instructors provided life-saving techniques for water survival. The cadets were shown techniques in making flotation gear and worked through simulations of abandoning ship both in daylight and at night. Cadets wore darkened goggles to simulate night time and jumped from the high dive platform; after surfacing, they followed the commands of an instructor to vocally guide them to the edge of the pool. Photo: Courtesy AMYA

ETT and carpentry cadets practice real world skills. A combined effort was made by the ETT and carpentry cadets to simulate casualties for the ETT students to respond to and utilize the skills they learned in class. Makeup artists were brought in to make carpentry students appear to have very realistic injuries to include severed fingers and head wounds. On another note, the ETT class was able to render real-world first aid to a fellow cadet suffering difficulties breathing on Academic Avenue and then hand him over to the nursing staff for further evaluation.

AMYA's partnership with the University of Alaska system has also provided college credit classes to its cadets. The common driving elements revolved around the desire to provide the best possible post-secondary opportunity for all participants. This was an arduous task and truly introduced these young cadets to the rigor of a college experience. In the fall class, 12 cadets successfully navigated the Math 054 class, in addition to all their other learning commitments and completed the requirements with all receiving three UA credits for their efforts.

AMYA is the second largest mentoring program in the nation. All cadets are required to have a mentor to be in the program. From time to time, there are cadets who do not have any adults in their lives who can serve in this capacity while they are here. We also have many students who come from rural Alaska who do not have mentors who can visit or keep in contact with the cadets during the residential phase of the program. If you are interested or you know someone who is interested in helping an Alaskan youth have a successful future, please contact the Recruiting, Placement and Mentoring section at (907) 384-6120. ■

### Iron Chef.

Cadet Mitchell T. Miracle, of Chugiak, from class 2011-01, shows off his potato cakes during the Iron Chef competition in which Culinary Arts cadets are divided into two teams to create a menu judged by Alaska Military Youth Academy staff members and invited guests. According to one of the judges, "the potato cakes were delicious."

Photo: Courtesy AMYA





## Protecting Employment Rights for Guard and Reserve



**Supporting Service Members.** Dennis M. McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, left, and Raymond Jefferson, assistant secretary for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service at the U.S. Department of Labor, sign a memorandum of understanding between Veterans' Employment and Training Service and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. The memorandum of understanding outlines the roles and responsibilities of VETS and ESGR in support of veterans, National Guardsmen and Reserve members. Photo: Courtesy of ESGR Public Affairs

By Mandi Rumble, ESGR Public Affairs

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** ... Dennis M. McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, and Raymond Jefferson, assistant secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service at the U.S. Department of Labor, met in November to sign a memorandum of understanding between Veterans' Employment and Training Service and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Both VETS and ESGR are fully committed to active coordination and cooperation to ensure that protected individuals are accorded their statutory employment and reemployment rights and that employer concerns are addressed. Such coordination and cooperation is particularly critical in light of the nation's increased reliance on Guard and Reserve service members.

The memorandum of understanding describes the roles and responsibilities of

VETS and ESGR in support of National Guard and Reserve members, as well as military veterans, particularly relating to employment and reemployment rights provided by the Uniformed Services

Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994.

This MOU articulates the current procedures for sharing communications, operational trends, public information, and other materials designed to inform the public, employers and persons protected by USERRA. It also clarifies procedures for the management of mobilization and demobilization briefings in conjunction with activations of National Guard and Reserve personnel, while establishing guidelines for handling technical assistance, information requests and USERRA complaints.

The Alaska Committee for ESGR works with local U.S. Department of Labor representatives to assist in collecting resources for employment opportunities for all members of the Alaska National Guard. Efforts to provide more civilian employment opportunities have started with the "brown bag" job skills workshop lunch every Wednesday at noon in the Alaska National Guard armory at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. A job fair is scheduled for March 18, 2011, and will provide representatives from more than 80 local businesses looking to hire service members. ■



**Thank You.** Then-Lieutenant Governor Craig Campbell, left, and Alaska Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve State Chairman Rich Owens, center, present the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service to Michael Machulsky for his tenure as the ESGR Alaska state chairman from 2003-2009 during an ESGR Patriot Awards luncheon held at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage in September. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paroan, DMVA Public Affairs





# Family Programs

## Survivor Outreach Services

By Family Programs Staff

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... Losing a loved one is one of the most difficult times anyone can experience. National Guard Survivor Outreach Services is a commitment to families of the fallen to connect with people and resources that can help those families find strength and move forward. SOS enables survivors to remain an important part of the military for as long as they desire.

National Guard Survivor Outreach Services in Alaska is housed along with Family Programs at Camp Denali on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. SOS is here to serve the survivors of service members from any component – active duty, Guard, Reserves, retiree or veteran, no matter which military branch, including the Alaska Territorial Guard.

SOS works closely with the Casualty Assistance Office on benefits and entitlements. SOS can provide survivors with assistance or referrals for peer support, bereavement or mental health counseling, financial counseling, obtaining reports and records and educational benefits.

“SOS is really here for all service member survivors,” said Lea Anne McWhorter, NGSOS coordinator. “Military life is unique, whether it’s active duty, Guard, retiree or veteran, and surviving families need to know their loved ones’ service was, and is still,

valued. I’ve been privileged to work with widows and children from WWII up to the present day, as well as parents and grandparents who miss their children, and they all appreciate the continued connection.”

Many times after the loss of a loved one, there are unresolved issues and questions that surface months or years after the loss. Survivor Outreach Services provides a holistic approach to delivering services to families in their local communities as much as possible. Services may be as easy as providing phone numbers for local resources, or more complex such as assisting survivors with detailed benefits questions or emotional issues; sometimes just being present is what is needed most.

Survivor Outreach Services is available to any military family who may desire some help with their loss. SOS is here for all survivors, from all services, at any time. As you go about your daily lives, please remember that SOS is available and be sure to refer SOS services to survivors who may benefit. If you have questions or referrals, please contact Lea Anne McWhorter or Rick Cavens in Anchorage at (907) 428-6066, nationwide toll free at (888) 917-3608 or via e-mail at [lea.a.mcwhorter.ctr@us.army.mil](mailto:lea.a.mcwhorter.ctr@us.army.mil) or [richard.cavens@us.army.mil](mailto:richard.cavens@us.army.mil). ■

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# Who We Are...

*What do you believe is most important about the holidays?*

**Staff Sergeant  
Tiffany Hutchison**

*Human Resources Specialist  
Joint Forces Headquarters*



"Communicating with my family is most important. I can't see them, but giving them a call is important to me."

**Jeff Slaikeu**

*Mail Clerk  
DMVA*



"I think that family and food are most important about the holidays."

**Specialist  
Briana Brown**

*Human Resources Specialist  
1-207th Aviation*



"Family is most important. The holidays give us a chance to get together and express how we feel by giving gifts and spending time."

**Major  
Ted McGovern**

*Chaplain, 1-297th Battlefield  
Surveillance Brigade*



"It's being able to celebrate God's gift of love to us and the birth of Christ."

**Lisa Merchant**

*Office Assistant  
DHS&EM*



"I think spending time with family and giving back to the community is what is most important."

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 SFC Jeffery Kowchee ..... 143rd BN  
 MSgt John A. Laqua ..... 168th OSF  
 Maj Guy Hayes ..... JFHQ-AK (Air)  
 SMSgt Richard Maxted ..... JFHQ-AK (Air)  
 MSgt Mack Schwalm ..... 176th CE

## Army Commendation Medal



SSG Martin Johnson ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SSG Clifton Thompson ..... 49th MDB

## Air Force Commendation Medal



SSgt Christine Dickson ..... 176th WG

## Army Achievement Medal



SSG Joseph Thibault ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)

## Air Force Achievement Medal



MSgt Travis Doyle ..... JFHQ-AK (Air)  
 TSgt Renee Dixon ..... 211th RQS

## Army Good Conduct Medal



SFC Melissa Hollingsworth .. JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MSG Jason Nesslage ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SGM Lillian Aukongak ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)

## Armed Forces Reserve Medal



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 MAJ Robert Gawrys ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MAJ Richard Mohammadi .. JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MSG Jason Nesslage ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SFC Melissa Hollingsworth .. JFHQ-AK (Army)

## Alaska Legion of Merit



SFC John Bertino ..... 207th AVN  
 LTC Douglas Harvey ..... MED DET, AKARNG

## Alaska Distinguished Service Medal



Lt Col Christopher Michl ..... 144th AS

## Alaska Commendation Medal



MSG David Simpson ..... 196th INF BDE  
 MSG Michael Vanengen ..... 196th INF BDE

## Alaska State Service Medal



MAJ Richard Mohammadi .. JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MAJ Robert Gawrys ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
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AMYA - Alaska Military Youth Academy



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Linda C. Dunegan .....176th MDG  
John C. Boston .....176th MDG  
Steven B. Latham .....210th RQS  
Scot A. Milani .....211th RQS  
John Brady .....MED DET  
Elijah Waters .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

### Major

Patrick J. McBride .....144th AS  
Jennifer L. Haney .....144th AS  
Gary Rowe .....297th BFSB  
Jared Wandell .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

### Captain

Nicholas T. Dillon .....176th ACS  
Shane L. Garling .....176th AMXS  
Candelario Torres .....176th LRS  
Eric R. Rutter .....176th MXS  
Margo E. Nirel .....176th OG  
Jeremy L. Jensen .....176th OG  
Jeremy M. Vancil .....249th AS  
Jason Caldwell .....1/143rd IN  
Peter Browning .....49th MDB  
Michael Long .....49th MDB

### First Lieutenant

Lucas A. Hernandez .....176th OG  
Duane R. Griffith .....176th STU FLT  
Charity H. Mollison .....176th WG

### Second Lieutenant

Robert W. Simpson .....176th LRS  
Yutashea J. Zirkle .....176th LRS

### Chief Warrant Officer Four

Tammy Kostoff .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
John Gerrish .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

### Chief Warrant Officer Three

Curtis Cain .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

### Chief Warrant Officer Two

Richard Fleming .....49th Personnel Det

### Warrant Officer

Craig Russell .....49th MDB  
Moses Toyukak Jr. ....207th AVN

### Master Sergeant (Army)

Timothy Smith .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

### Master Sergeant (Air)

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Erica L. McCoy .....168th ARW  
Derrick L. Coston .....176th ACS

Lundy D. Twiford .....176th ACS  
Michael C. Flynn .....176th CF  
Leonard O. Bundridge .....176th MOF  
Scott J. Lefebvre .....176th MSG

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### Technical Sergeant

Christopher J. Brunner .....144th AS  
Renaye K. Lavin .....144th AS  
Ray T. Marshall .....176th ACS  
Brandon M. Durocher .....176th LRS  
Patrick M. Hewlett .....176th MXS  
Christine M. Dickson .....176th WG  
Katelyn E. Langerman .....176th WG

### Sergeant

Paul Oliver .....103rd CST  
Kevin Mcan .....297th MP  
David Luntz .....207th BSC  
Jessee Spillman .....297th BFSB  
Andrew Mason .....207th AVN  
Neal Fulks .....297th MP

### Staff Sergeant (Air)

Brian J. Washburn .....168th LRS  
Jimmy L. Rice .....168th CF  
Anthony W. Lesle .....168th LRS  
Vanessa R. Marshall .....213th SWS  
Philip J. Whipkey .....168th CF  
Jake A. Hudson .....168th MXS  
Monica Eusebio .....168th ARW  
James B. Drake .....213th SWS  
Michael D. Greenley .....168th MXS  
Cody S. Smith .....168th MXS  
Kit D. Dawson .....168th MOF  
Nathan J. Grilliot .....144th AS  
Brian M. Belcher .....176th ACS  
Kenneth H. Gross .....176th CES  
John P. Charron .....176th LRS  
Clayton A. Deloach .....176th LRS  
David O. Williams .....176th LRS  
Shannon L. Garris .....176th MXS  
Eric M. Peltier .....176th MXS  
Jessica M. Barodte .....176th MXS  
Chad M. Lemaster .....176th MXS  
Tiesha L. Allen .....176th MDG  
Robert J. Remy .....176th OG  
Kylie M. Lippert .....176th OSS  
Holly A. Arant .....176th SFS  
Tiffany R. Knight .....176th WG  
James L. Seigneur .....210th RQS  
Ryan L. Baxter .....210th RQS  
Jacob M. Inman .....210th RQS  
Christopher G. Bowerfind .....212th RQS

## RETIREMENTS

MSgt Shannon W. Epps .....168th AMXS

MSgt Cynthia A. Kirgan .....168th ARS

MSgt Becky J. Irish .....213th SWS

TSgt Jenny L. Hagensieker .....168th CF

SSgt Ronda Cade .....168th ARW

Lt Col Lance R. Jennings .....168th ARW

MSgt Danny C. Coleman .....168th LRS

MSgt Richard P. Cain .....168th OG

TSgt Christopher W. Kern .....168th SFS

TSgt Anthony L. Gardner .....176th FSF/SVF

TSgt Ryan L. Waters .....176th ACS

TSgt Willie J. Hardee .....176th MSG

MSgt Brian D. Anderson .....176th ACS

MSgt Donna Pasley .....176th LRS

MSgt Sonny W. Dean .....76th ACS

MSgt Yvonne Little .....176th MSG

SMSgt Iscah M. Miles .....176th OSF/OSA

SMSgt Theodore Poplarchik .....144th AS

CMSgt Jeffrey M Beelmann .....176th SFS

SFC John Sztajer .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

SFC Lauren Kostoff .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

SFC Jeffery Kowchee .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

SFC Jonathan Shivel .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

LTC David Allen .....JFHQ-AK (Army)

CW2 Matthew Magsino .....JFHQ-AK (Army)





# Start of the Trail

Welcome our newest members & employees

## 297th Cavalry

Jason Sutton  
Steven Maloney  
Ronald Wiese  
Jonathan Settle

## 297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance

Laramie Yancey  
Jordan Feltz  
Dylan Briggs  
Lucas Shelley  
Daniel Pule  
James Stough

## 297th Military Police

Israa Kako  
Dakota Volkman  
William Port  
Joshua Hahn

## 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne)

Collin Day  
Ryan Langton

## 207th Brigade Support Company

Bailey Nowka  
David Huff  
Tylor Dolfi  
Colton Shaner  
Courtney Pelland  
Bryce McCarter

## 1-207th Aviation

Stefanie Hall  
Matthew Bautista  
Kyle Bauder  
Elizabeth Erickson  
Brandon Dickinson  
Nevine Zaki  
Ashley Waetjen

## 297th Military Police Company

Brice Harvey  
Christopher Pacheco  
Randall Segelhorst  
Ulysses Cortez

## 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade

Jacob Bookbinder  
Skye Long



**Wedding, then Enlistment.** Alaska Air National Guard Chaplain Major Matthew Friese, center, weds Jessica Lauren Bryant and James Floyd Amos in October in the Operations Theater on Kulis Air National Guard Base. Immediately following the vows and wedding ceremony, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Griesbaum, commander of the 176th Maintenance Squadron, enlisted Amos, with his new bride by his side, into the Alaska Air National Guard. The couple married before the enlistment so they could join the Guard family together. Amos is training to become a crew chief for the C-17 Globemaster III. Photo: Master Sergeant Shannon Oleson, 176th Wing Public Affairs

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## Warriors Training Schedule

Here are the inactive training dates for most Alaska Army and Air National Guard units. All dates are subject to change.

Alaska National Guard	February	March	April
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	12-13	19-20	16-17
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	11-13	19-20	15-17
<b>Alaska Army National Guard</b>			
297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	11-13	18-20	15-17
38th Troop Command	11-13	12-13	15-17
<b>Alaska Air National Guard</b>			
168th Air Refueling Wing	12-13	19-20	16-17
176th Wing	12-13	19-20	16-17
<b>Alaska State Defense Force</b>			
Headquarters	5-6	5-6	2-3



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